

### **Abstract**

The students enrolled in the school are mainly from the neighbourhood belonging to mixed community affiliations. Their families are employed as daily wagers, brick industry labourers, vendors, agricultural labourers etc. Children from families of tea garden labourers are comparatively more vulnerable, perhaps due to the pressure from their families to join labour force rather prematurely. The head and staff members personally visited homes and work places to create awareness among parents and insisted them to send their children to school. The school organized campaigns in the village to create social awareness towards making girls independent both socially and financially through education. With limited resources, initiative was taken to provide vocational training, mainly in the area of computer education, on every Saturday. Teachers are making continuous efforts to incorporate technology into their teaching learning practices for certain subjects and concepts. The school conducts continuous and open discussions with community groups on reasons of drop out and how to prevent it; as a result of continuous efforts students often admit that nowadays their parents do not stop them from coming to school, even instances of child marriage have lowered as parents and students have become more aware.

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### **Socio-Cultural Context of the School**

The students enrolled in the school are mainly from the nearby areas and they are from a mixed community (TGL minority and General Caste). They belong to the families of daily wagers, brick industry labourers, vendors, agricultural labourers/self-employed in agriculture sector and their families has to struggle to earn their livelihoods. Among the groups, incidence of poverty is higher among the TGL minorities as compared to that among general caste students. As a result, the TGL boys are comparatively more vulnerable, perhaps due to the pressure from their families to join the labour force rather prematurely. Assamese language is the medium of instruction.





**Major Challenges faced by School-** One of the major challenges that the school has been facing is that the rate of dropout from the school among the students (mainly TGL minority) during the winter months is quite high as they engage themselves in the nearby brick industries as daily wage workers.

*1) School dropouts (Partial dropout and Permanent dropout)*

**Major Reasons are as follows-**

- **Non-supporting parents-** Many parents are neither sure what their children are going to do after studies and nor they get convinced with the advantages of their children being educated. So they engage their children in the same job they have been doing (mainly in brick industries and tea gardens) and it is unfortunate that students tend to give up their education in face of economic reasons. Also, some parents engage their school-going child (mainly girls) to look after their younger siblings which ultimately hampers the student's education.
- **Early marriage-** This is also a very prevalent factor among the girl students violating their rights to health, education and opportunity. Their families force them to get married in order to escape the cycle of poverty and they consider it as a 'release of burden'.

**Plan to bring a transformation-** In order to bring a transformation from the prevailing situations, the school made certain plans to provide a conducive school environment to the students (a positive school culture and meaningful relationships with teachers) in order to motivate them to come to school regularly. Also, students were made to perform street plays and organize awareness campaigns under the assistance of the staff. Moreover, community collaboration in various aspects was highly encouraged and a positive response was achieved to a certain extent.

#### **Efforts Initiated or the Process of Transformation**

- **Emphasizing the importance of education-** The staff members personally visited their (drop out students) homes and work places and insisted to prevent the students from leaving the school by showing them attractive future job opportunities that requires a certain degree, for which they has to continue their education. This effort was made in order to make them realize that if they study properly until a certain age, they are more likely to get a job that would uplift their lifestyle and decrease the chances of physical labour. The married students were also met personally and we insisted them to pursue their education, with a motive that they don't lag behind.



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- **Creating awareness campaigns-** In order to reduce the instance of early marriage among the girl students, the school organized a campaign in the same village in order to create social awareness which aimed at making girls independent both socially and financially through education.



- **Providing Vocational training-** With the limited resources present in the school, an initiative was taken to provide vocational trainings mainly in the area of computer education on every Saturday. After the implementation of this strategy, it is seen that the students are eager to attend this class and come to school even on Saturday (in spite of being a half-day), but earlier most of the students didn't attend the school mostly on weekends.
- **Creating digitalized classes-** Although it is not possible to set up fully digitalized classrooms with the insufficient facilities, the staffs is making an immense effort to incorporate technology into their teaching practices for certain subjects and chapters. The students are found to be much more interested to learn in this way as compared to that of the orthodox way of learning.
- **Community collaboration-** The plans made for the students, challenges faced by the staff mainly due to partial and permanent dropouts and the reasons behind it are often discussed with the community groups by organizing meetings at the school. Their views and suggestions are highly appreciated by the staff members. By adapting this strategy, it is found that the educated members of the community themselves came up to create awareness about the importance of education among the uneducated and poorer section of the community. This method has been highly effective as the students themselves admitted that nowadays their parents doesn't stop them from coming to the school like earlier, on the insistence of their educated neighbours.

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### **Student's involvement in the project-**

In order to create social awareness about the importance of education, the students prepared themselves for street play (with script of their own) and performed in a very pleasing manner. They also participated energetically in organizing awareness campaigns, prepared play cards under the assistance of their teachers.

**Stakeholders involved-** Community groups and renowned members of the village (e.g. Retired teachers) have always played a supporting role whenever their involvement was requested.

### **Visible Results of Transformation**

#### **Results of change**

- The regular attendance of school has increased up to a remarkable extent (mainly after visiting them personally and convincing them as well as their parents).
- The same parents who earlier hesitated to send their children to school, themselves came up to receive their children's free text books on the book distribution day this year (2019).
- Many students began to open up about the difficulties they face while learning a particular subject and accordingly "individualized" attention is given to every student.
- Many students are now-a-days very much eager to consult with their teachers regarding a realistic career plan.

#### **Impact on students**

The result of the adapted strategy has proved to create a positive impact on the students (mainly partial dropouts) which is clearly reflected from the increase of their regular attendance. No instance of early marriage of school students has also been found till date after organizing the awareness campaigns, but this was a very common thing earlier. The students became sensible about the importance of education in order to earn a good life in the future.

### **Further Areas for Change/Transformation**

#### **School Sanitary hygiene practices**

Although there are separate toilets for girls and boys and proper running water facilities, the students fail to maintain basic toilet hygiene (as they lack such practices at home) resulting in dirty and foul smelling toilets. Poor hygiene practices and inadequate utilization of sanitation facilities are also major causes of high incidence of diarrheal diseases among the students, which definitely affects their school attendance. So, this is a major area in which the school staff is planning to focus on, not only at the school level, but also at the household level.



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### Plans

1. Provide training to the students about the use of school latrines and surrounding water and sanitation areas.
2. Conduct a school sanitation campaign where the parents, along with their children will be invited, which will internalize sanitation and hygiene concerns.
3. Register households for monitoring if proper cleanliness and hygiene practices are maintained at the school. This way will surely enhance the community's participation at the school programs and they will also learn the importance of maintaining healthy sanitary practices at their households.

### School leader and Transformation

As a school leader, I feel myself to have these certain strengths-



1. **A good communicator-** I believe that I acquire good public speaking skills and writing skills. I always try to express myself in a clear and simple way during meetings, speeches, practices so that everyone is more likely to want to listen to me.
2. **A fair person-** I never believe in playing favorites and never mix up professional and personal lives together. I make sure that the same consequences or duties are applied to everyone equally in a group.
3. **A good mentor and counselor-** Whenever a student or staff member comes to me for guidance, I always invest me in providing constructive suggestions to help my mentees find success and gratification in their areas of concern.
4. **A strong minded person-** I am a person with a strong mind who is always prepared to face challenges with a cool state of mind and believe in command decision making whenever the situation demands.

**Certain changes I have undergone after school transformation**

1. **I knew my own strengths-** Knowing my own strengths helps me to choose what areas of leadership I should focus on.
2. **Involvement and awareness-** I always involve myself in almost every activity going on in the school which allows me to gain knowledge about the group and keep informed about how the things are progressing.
3. **Being resourceful-** I believe this to be my job to create access to information and to supplies that would be needed for various activities and progress.
4. **Flexibility-** I always try to be a good listener to the staff and community members while deciding to implement a certain rule or policy in the school. So, I believe in being open to change.